THE

Registered No. M. 476

Wednesday Review

OF

POLITICS, LITERATURE, SOCIETY, SCIENCE, Etc.

Vol. XV.
No. 13.

26 March, 1919.

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HEAD OFFICE.—3, Main Guard Road, Teppakulam, Trichinopoly.
LONDON AGENTS:—W. M. Dawson and Sons, Ltd., 121 Cannon Street, London E. C.

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We may be permitted to state that the views of our contributors and correspondents do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Wednesday Review.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

There is a slight inconsistency between what Mr. Bonar Law said on the subject of Indian reform in reply to a question by Sir J. D. Rees in the House of Commons and what the *Times* has recently said on the subject. While the Leader of the House of Commons has stated that the Government are considering the proposal to appoint a Parliamentary Committee on Indian affairs the *Times* has said that the Reform scheme has made considerable progress. Mr. Bonar Law's statement with regard to the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee is more comprehensive than we expected. We are told that a Select Committee will be appointed, not merely to inquire and report on the Mortague-Chelmsford proposals, but to inquire into Indian affairs generally, of which the Reform scheme will be a part. That takes us very much beyond the purpose for which a parliamentary committee is demanded. If Mr. Bonar Law has been correctly reported, the only inference that can be made from the statement is, that the Coalition Government with a distinctive Unionist majority are not as eager to rush through Parliament a reform bill for India as Mr. Montagu and his friends appear to be. The effect of an enquiry on Indian affairs generally will mean the shelving of the Reform scheme indefinitely and it is not likely that such a comprehensive enquiry as has been forehadowed by Mr. Bonar Law, will be closed in a short period of time; for anything we know the inquiry may spread over a year or two at the least and this would mean that no legislation in regard to Indian reform will be undertaken till the committee has made its report. That is a long way off surely and the calculation of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State that India will have been placed on its way to political salvation by July next year may go wrong and anything may happen in the meanwhile. From all accounts it appears that the present Coalition Government may not last very long and the majority it is now commanding, is only a crack majority as it is called. The Lloyd-George Government has come into power on the crest of a wave of war enthusiasm and when peace is made the support which it may get from the country may not be quite so enthusiastic or strong as it is now and if this Government goes, the Parliament and the Government that may succeed may take another view of Indian reform. So that if Mr. Bonar Law has faithfully interpreted the intentions of the Government we shall have to hold our soul in patience for a good while yet, before the problem of Indian reform is seriously tackled in Parliament.

As regards the comment of the *Times*, it is, as we have said, in variance with the statement of Mr. Bonar Law. Our London contemporary's information is that considerable progress has been made

in the matter of gathering materials for legislation. Probably it bases its view on the circumstance that the India Office Committee has begun its work and that the Southborough Committees' reports are ready to be placed in the hands of the Cabinet. But we must point out and we believe the *Times* will agree with us in saying it, that the India Office Committee's recommendations with regard to the organisation of the India Office and the Secretary of State's Council and the Southborough Committees' report are not the materials that may be necessary for a proper understanding by Parliament and the Cabinet of the reform proposals contained in the Joint-report. Our contemporary has been rightly insisting for sometime past upon the appointment of a select committee to obtain evidence on the Montague-Chemlsford Scheme and make its recommendations before a bill is drafted and introduced into Parliament. It is therefore not quite clear what our contemporary means when it says that considerable progress has been made with the scheme. We may be allowed to remark in passing that it is difficult to understand exactly the position taken by the *Times* on the subject of Indian Reforms. Take what it says on the recent manifesto of the moderate leaders on the subject, issued perhaps as a counter-blast to the resolutions of the Extremist Congress at Bombay. We may say at once that it is wrong for any one to think that the moderate manifesto reflects any large body of public opinion in India. The educated classes are not the whole of Indian people and they represent only about 1 per cent of them and of this 1 per cent we have to deduct the extremes, which does not leave us very much. Now it is an open secret that the large majority of the population know absolutely nothing about the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals and there is a large volume of influential and informed opinion in the country which does not care to be vociferous, which thinks that the Montague-Chemsford proposals as they stand will not be to the good of the country.

We are afraid that the Moderate manifesto takes a different view and it apprehends that any criticism against the proposals will end in the proposals being modified in a way which may not be to the taste of the authors. In a matter of such vital importance to the country the personal predilections of the authors of the proposals, ought not to stand in the way of the details of the proposals being closely sifted. As we have had occasion to say, the spirit of the scheme is unexceptionable and it is the details to which we have to take strong exception. The *Times* assures the signatories to the moderate manifesto that opinion in England has not stiffened against the scheme as they fear. There may have been no stiffening as our contemporary calls it, but surely there has been gathering a volume of opinion in England which can by no means be ignored as reactionary or ill-informed, which insists on every detail of the Montague-Chelmsford scheme being examined closely and severely before legislation is attempted or undertaken. If that should be called stiffening we for our part are not sorry. The *Times* tells us that the provincial authorities in India are not much in love with diarchy. It is no discovery of the *Times* and the views of the Provincial authorities ought to surprise none. Those who have to bear the brunt of the administration must realise that the setting up of a diarchy in the place of a single executive as now, will only lead to complications of all kinds and will prove a source of irritation and annoyance to all concerned. The most dangerous proposal contained in the joint-report is the bifurcation of the administration in to reserved and transferred subjects. The main danger will be in entrusting the transferred subjects to ministers, chosen from the elected members of the Legislative Council. Considering the kind of electorate which we are to have under the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme which, let us remember, is to be evolved out of a population of which nearly 94 per cent is absolutely illiterate, it is easy enough to imagine from what class of agitators the ministers that are to be, will be drawn. There would be at least some excuse for the ministerial system of administration if the choice will not be confined to the elected members. Because a member is elected he has no extra merit attached to him. There is no justification for making an unmeaning distinction between the elected and the nominated elements in the council. We are entirely opposed to the ministerial system itself, but if it should be forced upon us, let it be in a modified form so as to include the nominated members among those who may be statutorily declared to be fit to be ministers whatever their personal and inherent merits or demerits. The views of the provincial authorities on the matter should carry great weight with the Cabinet and Parliament in considering the proposal to entrust certain subjects to be administered by ministers. We have not as yet come across any reasoned argument in favour of this particular form of Government in the joint report or elsewhere. The glamour of the proposal is due to the notion that it will approximate to the parliamentary system of government, but a close examination will show that it is nothing of the kind. So long as we have no party system in India and as the British are a constant factor in the administration, it is idle to institute any comparison with the parliamentary system in England. If that is realised, we dare say, half the glamour of the proposal will disappear. We should trust that the India Office as well as the Parliamentary Committee which might be set up, will pay special attention to this particular proposal,—understand the risk involved in adopting it-and one great service they may do to India is to drop the proposal altogether.

The passive resisters were in high glee at the dramatic exit of the Hon'ble Mr. B. N. Sarma from the Imperial Council. As a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Bill there were all the features of melodrama about it the moment chosen for the resignation, the manner of handing it in, and the news which an obsequious correspondent obligingly flashed over the

country that the martyr-member was shaking the dust of Delhi off his feet immediately. But the melodrama has been succeeded by the rather prosaic announcement, that under friendly pressure the Hon'ble member has withdrawn his resignation. It is a pity that the resignation was not withdrawn under official pressure and we have not heard that the Viceroy was in tears, when such a distinguished colleague of his was compelled to think that the Imperial Council was no place for him. It now appears that Mr. Sarma did not take the next train to Madras after his resignation. Perhaps, if he had disappointment to passive resisters would not have come so soon. Evidently the Hon'ble Member remained long enough to be pressed by his friends to take back his resignation. His Madras admirers who went into ecstacies over the action of their hero must have been considerably non-plussed by his withdrawal and they are waiting to learn from him the reason for such an abrupt change in his attitude. Having withdrawn his resignation there would be no excuse for him to be absent from the Council meetings and leave his constituents unrepresented. The sequel to the incident will be that other threatened resignations will not follow as he who bravely set the example went back upon it before the ink was dry on his letter of resignation. We may therefore expect the whole lot of them to go back to the Council and continue there just as though no Rowlatt Legislation was passed. We suppose the glory of resignation will be Mr. Sarma's and the discredit of pressing him to withdraw will go to his friends.

One of the Adyar group has been frantically reminding the outside world that the National education week is approaching and the whole province must address itself to the task of collecting funds for national education. It is plain that the chief promoter of the scheme is doubtful if he can whip up enthusiasm to the same degree as he could do last year. Unfortunately there has been no internment and consequent sensation except for Mr. Gandhi and his passive resistance. Madras is doing its daily round in its usual quiet style relieved occasionally by a strike of tramway men or a lecture of Mr. Pal. The circumstances that went up to create a sensation which would last for a week are absent and the National education week promises to be a tame affair. We shall not be surprised if in spite of collectors and commissioners the National Education till is practically empty. For one thing Mrs. Besant is not the popular favourite she was about this time last year. The youthful adherents who shouted at the top of their voices 'make room for Mrs. Besant' are no longer in her train. What is worse, she has to mourn for the lack of decorum and decencies of public life. She herself does not seem to be keen upon celebrating the National education week. So everything points, to the fact that it is going to be one man's affair. There is nothing surprising in this turn of events. Even if Mrs. Besant had continued to be the heroine of the day and her youthful following had continued to be led by her instead of throwing her overboard as they have done there would not be the same unthinking enthusiasm over a fad which marred one whole week last year. It may be within the recollection of our readers that the leading spirits of the National education movement in Bengal held a monster demonstration and told his hearers that the demonstration was held to collect funds for a movement whose purpose would be explained to them later on. That was a sample of the way in which enthusiasm for the cause was worked up. We do not know what has become of the large funds collected last year and if any trust has been formed to administer the funds. If it was merely an Adyar affair we won't care to be inquisitive about it, but as funds have come from many parts of the country, we have a right to know how it is proposed to apply them. It is due to those who paid out in hard cash last year to be enlightened on the point before they are made to pay again.

Sir James Meston presented the final budget for 1919—20 and some variations from the original estimates are noticeable. It was estimated when the financial statement was presented that the deficit will be £. 4,320,000, but now it is estimated the deficit will run up to £ 4,568,000. The difference amounting to £ 200,000 is due mainly to a fall in the customs revenue and in the land revenue. The Government also propose to ear mark a larger sum for famine relief. There are undoubted signs of scarcity and the Government are well advised in proposing to spend more in famine relief. Another cause of variation is the inclusion of a sum of £. 33,000 as a public health fund to combat epidemics. The recent havoc by influenza must have convinced the Government that the necessary preventive steps have not been taken against such diseases. We cannot say that £ 33,000 is any adequate sum for such a large object, but we take the assurance of the Finance member that it is only a nucleus and when normal conditions return the Government will be glad to augment it. The Finance member explained that the Government considered it desirable to emphasise by a small initial grant, their acceptance of the principle that the central machinery for dealing with diseases should be developed. One feature to which the Finance member referred and which is certainly encouraging is that the Post Office deposits which averaged at 20 lakhs a month during the closing months of last year, rose to 42 lakhs in January and 73½ in February. When the war broke out there was a rush on the post-office deposits owing to false alarms and this restoration of popular confidence in Post-Office deposits as a safe investment, is due to the signing of the armistice. It may be a small detail in the financial situation, but shows the returning of popular confidence in the financial stability of the Government and from that view it is a great gain, indeed.

THE
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WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH, 1919.

THE RETIRING GOVERNOR OF MADRAS.

WE bid a reluctant farewell to Lord Pentland whose administration of Madras for nearly seven years has been memorable in more respects than one. He came to this Presidency with credentials of a high order and brought with him the traditions of a sturdy liberal. He did not belie those traditions and an unprejudiced critic of his administration will not hesitate to pronounce it a signal success. There is no gainsaying that His Excellency's administration was cast in difficult and troublous times. Circumstances conspired to disturb occasionally an otherwise placid and progressive rule. If he had had his own way, he would not have suffered any disturbance. But where Lord Pentland had a right to expect their moral and active support the Supreme Government meddled and muddled and made his task more difficult. At such interference which was not infrequent a Governor with less patience and of another temper would have thrown of the job as not worth one's while, but only his real sympathy for the people entrusted to his care induced him to keep on even longer than the usual term of five years. But it was fortunate for Madras that in Lord Pentland they had a Governor who did his best to serve the people undeterred by happenings which would have driven any other to distraction. Agitators who would have rejoiced at it if Lord Pentland had resigned in a huff when the India Government set at liberty Mrs. Besant and her two associates who had been interned for carrying on an agitation which the Madras Government thought to be dangerous and subversive of order, made artful suggestions to drive him to that course, but to no purpose. Lord Pentland knew his duty better than the critics thought. The first act of His Excellency which showed his mettle was the demand of security for the *New India* Printing works which led to the unrighteous outburst of Mrs. Besant that 'British Justice exists in India only for the criminal and for civil suits, and under the rule of the bureaucrat it is safer to conspire than to seek for reforms, in an open, law abiding constitutional way' and 'there is no security for liberty or property; everyone is an outlaw'. This action of His Excellency was caught hold of to start a campaign of calumny and malicious misrepresentation of official measures without distinction, and the climax of it was reached when Mrs. Besant was interned. The Home Rule papers poured their vials of wrath on the devoted head of Lord Pentland. And it did not avail as the agitators expected to turn him from doing his stern duty in the interests of good government. The wholesome order restraining students from taking part in political movements was another occasion for misrepresentations. When again Lord Pentland warned mischievous agitators in his memorable speech at Ootacamand in May 1917 against the consequences of their acts, he was accused of being a heartless autocrat bent on suppressing all lawful political agitation. But the communique which was issued subsequently clearly pointed out that the Government had absolutely no objection to constitutional agitation of any kind but they could not suffer agitation which aimed at the disruption of British rule. They said 'against self-government within the British Empire as the political ideal for India they have offered no opposition. The legitimacy of that ideal is not disputed by them. Holding as they do however that the ultimate ideal of full and responsible self-government can be reached in time only by successive stages as education extends, as elements of discussion diminish and as large numbers of the vast inarticulate populations of India acquire some measure of political status and experience, they must condemn strongly the advocacy of establishment of complete autonomy for India at the close of the war in terms which deny or wholly ignore the possibility of successive steps in the development of that ideal.' Lord Pentland himself had made his position clear and that of his Government in his Ootacamand speech, the keynote of which was that self-government was the salt and strength of British Empire. But he would not sit with folded hands and look on a movement which was 'fraught with real danger not only to good government but to the law abiding spirit and the good will among all classes which exist at present in this presidency' and he therefore called for public support 'in any action which the Government may be forced to take to discourage these unwise and dangerous methods and the extravagant aims which they are designed to further.' The warning was not heeded to but openly defied by those to whom it was addressed. We need not follow the sequel and the indecent manner in which the Government of India interfered with the discretion of the Local Government. If Lord Pentland had been allowed a freehand we should have seen the last of an unwholesome agitation in the year 1917. The insane policy of creating a calm atmosphere by placating the anarchists was inaugurated with disastrous results and the warnings of a sagacious ruler like Lord Pentland were set at naught. His recent action in refusing to extend the term of the Madras Legislative Council is in keeping

with his firmness and resolution. We have had to refer to these incidents as they would show what odds Lord Pentland had to contend against in carrying on the administration of Madras for the last seven years without doing violence to the principles of his liberal creed and to the great benefit of the millions under his care. Barring the few petty and petulant detractors whom Lord Pentland did not care to placate, the people of Madras will cherish his administration in grateful remembrance which was marked all along by beneficent activities for their advancement and well-being.

LET US KNOW THE TRUTH.

'By Workman.'

According to '*Capital*' of March 24th the Bombay correspondent says they have been mildly excited by a proposal of the Anglican Bishop of Bombay to erect an All-India Christian Memorial which should not only represent the facts of the War but have a significance for the Future.

The Memorial would take the form of a great Church in shape of the Greek Cross. Each of the four arms would be assigned to one of the four great Sects of the Christian Community, the fundamental unity of all being witnessed by their heartily joining in completing the edifice with a handsome Dome over the Central Court.

The idea, considered undoubtedly magnificent, may be said to carry out in detail what has been advocated in this Journal, to fuse into fundamental harmony the voices of the Four Great Indian Castes on matters of World-Work and Government.

Given the opportunity of proving Truth in matters of detail there would soon be little to divide the world on the great Principles of policy and conduct. It is the possibility that such Memorials might be used for such a supreme World-Purpose that consitiutes the great significance of the good Bishop's high Ideal.

We need not be astonished that 'the man in the street' hustling and bustling to get the daily bread, with scant time to think out what appears an abstruse problem, dismisses the idea as 'pure moonshine.' Yet there is the small voice that tells him—"man does not live (a life worth living) by Bread alone, but by every World of God."

Now to every thinking man God has spoken through the War and shown the world the result of its own follies in its failure of Unity of Purpose under the Highest Ideals. Then if Humanity is touched by the Religious inspiration, will it not follow the Almighty's will with the docility of a little Child.!

Again, in adolescence has man's intelligence been so buried like the hidden Talent instead of being used to fructify the good seed the Creator continually offers, that he cannot, with all this experience gained, divise ways and means of getting the 'daily bread' of life produced and distributed, without mixing it with the blood of Martyrs, destroyed friendships or invoking the aid of the powers of Darkness for un-holy aims and objects. ! !

History furnishes ample evidence, that Religions instead of laying the foundation of Co-operative World Government have often been used as the pivots of mass attacks on it. There is a fundamental Error here. The fact of the existence of Organised Religious teachings and Administrative Offices in charge of various Denominations, does not clash with the Divine Ideal at the bottom of the whole of them.

But in the absence of practical working organisations for producing and distributing the 'Daily Bread' to all God's Humanity without friction or loss, the lead of the Denominational Teachers is followed; and technical businesses together with identities of communal interests find ready service everywhere through innumerable Caste organisations; educative in their operation, since they afford centres for exchange of information and intelligence over the common work actually going on at all times and places.

Thus in our Indian History and work practice we realise that Unity of Purpose is not best carried out by rigid uniformity in Detailed processes, which are better treated under local conditions, and by the possible means found to hand, than by empirical formulae, more suitable to vast operations such as World-Work and Government calls into action.

Nevertheless it is obvious that no country can carry on work and duties without having International relations. It is for the purpose of harmonious concert with other peoples that we want ways and means of joining all forces and all intelligencies in evolving Truth about the common purpose, and determining action.

President Willson has done wonders to formulate proposals for Leagues of Nations with defined powers and objects. The man in the street perhaps sees more moonshine in them; but the idea is eminently practical and acceptable to all intelligent workers.

What the world wants is protection against attacks by any forces working for the Evil, threatening it from any quarter. If we want to know where the Evil is to come from it is certain to be found out by every Country erecting its own Palace, solely devoted to discussions, directed to evolve World Truth on every Department of Work and Policy affecting itself and the whole of Humanity.

In the Temple, or Palace, on the Greek Cross Plan, accommodation for India's Four Great Castes to assemble would be provided for Imperial discussions, either by each separate Caste in its own quarter, or all or any of the Castes in the Central Hall. Truths established, would be recorded, and possibly disputed in other Palaces of Truth; the fundamental Error being thus ultimately eliminated-

The responsibility for starting such a system with a world-wide single purpose surely rests on the leaders of the Four Great Castes in every country. Christians may be proud of the 'Lead' given by the Bishop of Bombay in the matter, which it is hoped may devlop into a First Aid to the World concert to be expected under the Glorious Ideal of the Godly and Righteous Leagues of Nations.!

TOPICS FROM PERIODICALS.

INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS: THEIR VALUE IN THE FORMATION OF INDIAN CHARACTER.

Most of our superstitions are at bottom matters of faith more than matters of practice. They are intended not so much to regulate or circumscribe our activity, but to cultivate our heart, to teach us reverence for the past, obedience to authority, implicit trust in occult guidance, they teach us to believe that there are invisible powers.

> "Which of themselves our minds impress;
> That we can feed this mind of ours
> In a wise passiveness."

Herein lies the true value of Indian superstitions They may provoke our reason; they may enlarge our sense of propriety; they may offened our taste They may sometimes cause us discomfort; they may sometimes waste our time; but these are the very worst that they ever do. They will never violate the laws of morality, or the dictates of humanity, or the rules of social decorum. They are harmless, insignificant little things that take away nothing from your honour or happiness. On the contrary they supply much that is wanting in your character; they nourish your faith in the invisible, and thus they uphold us, cherish us,

> "And have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence."

To those that know her truly, India is not the hot bed of superstitions, but the congenial home of faith It is faith—implicit, unquestioning, unreasoning faith —that forms the most essential characteristic of the Hindu mind. It is faith, faith, faith, everywhere. It prompts the manifold activities of the people, whether those activities are expected to yield any visible or tangible result in the present life, or are believed to bear fruit only in the next world. For time is a matter of no concern to the pious Hindu, who can look back to countless lives that he has already lived and also look forward to countless more that he will in the future. He is in no hurry, therefore, to reap the harvest of his virtues, he only cares for the virtues, leaving the harvest to come in its own time. This his faith, and this faith sustains him both in his trials and in his triumphs.

The most remarkable thing about these suprestitions is that there is no word in the whole vocabulary of Indian tongues equivalent to the English word 'superstition.' Words have been coined, but they have been treated as counterfeit. The Hindus do not regard any belief as absurd, if it is a sincere article of faith, and is acted upon in daily life. Belief unsupported by practice is a despicable thing in all eyes; one name of it is hypocrisy, and hypocrisy is an abominable sin in the eyes of the faithful people of India. The true test of faith is, not whether it satisfies the canons of judgment, but whether it prompts a man to action, and whether that action is done habitually and like a duty. All tests in order to be valid, should be practical and fair. To test a belief of the heart by applying to it the rules of the syllogism, is as unfair as to test steel by rubbing it on the touchstone. If we test these Indian beliefs practices by the proper criterion, we shall find that it is as wrong to condemn them for being unreasonable, as to discount the value of gold because we cannot make rails of that metal.

And it is faith which is always and everywhere one of the most human qualities in human character. There is nothing in modern Indian education which tends to the cultivation of faith. While every effort is made to train the intellectual facilties of comperhension, memory, imagination, and reasoning; while the body too receives its due share of attention; while education aims also at the formation of character, it leaves faith entirely untouched. It has very good reasons for doing so. The proper place for the awakening and development of faith, is the home; and if nothing is done to cultivate it there, early enough in life, it withers, or perishes, or subsists in a devitalised condition in which it is scarcely conscious of its own existence, much less capable of making that existence felt by others. Hence it is that modern education is sometimes accused of breeding in Indian youths a tendency to scepticism—an offence for which it is the home that is really responsible. Scepticism is not a bad thing in itself: it is sometimes the precursor of a faith of firmer limbs and finer vitality than many of the morbid make-believes of our day, which have been worn by ages of formality into the thinnest phantasm. The proper attitude of the cultured mind towards these ancient superstitions is that of toleration and respect —not condemnation unheard, or contempt undeserved. Let your toleration be a sceptical or a conditional one, if you like; let your respect be a qualified respect by all means; but let it not stop there. Weigh them and consider them; inquire into their history; estimate their utility with an unbiassed mind; and wherever you discover any elements of good, adapt them to the needs and circumstances of the present age. And even in cases in which you can discover nothing good, you should wait. You ought not to withhold sympathy from those who still cling spasmodically to them. You ought not to despise the ignorant for their ignorance, but should try to lead them to a knowledge of the truth; and you ought to reverence the unblemished, unsophisticated soul, the seat of living faith, the fountain of active piety and benevolence, which are oftener done at the prompting of blind instinct than at the bidding of cold, calculating reason.

Those educated Indians who feel disposed to rail at their superstitious brethren for their stupid notions and foolish practices, have only to learn one thing to keep quiet: that some of their own "enlightened" views are regarded by these humble folk as something much worse than superstition,—apostasy! Superstition is of course a relative term. The veriest of verities may be assailed as superstition and the grossest fetish venerated as a divine image. Where is the boundary-line to be drawn between worthy and unworthy beliefs? And who is to be the arbiter in a case of dispute? Each party claims for its own opinions the same degree of infalliability, even though the two sets of opinions may be ranged at the two ends of a diameter. It is not the theories of science alone that occupy a place of supremacy in human opinion: the simple faith of the unlettered multitude is sometimes more fruitful of good than the triumphant achievements of science. It is faith, more than anything else, that has saved the Hindu race from extinction. While the ancient Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians have all perished one by one, the ancient Hindus still stand as strong and unshaken in faith as they were when the hymns of the *Rig Veda* were first chanted on the banks of the Indus. And the secret of this undecaying existence is their faith; and their faith is the key to their character; and this key is in the keeping of you and me. Let us therefore give every encouragement to whatever aids the growth and perpetuity of this faith. Let not the word 'superstition' frighten us; the word unfortunately carries a stigma in these days; but let us remember that a worse stigma would attach itself to the educated man if he allows the time-honoured customs of his country to fall into disuse and decay merely because in foreign eyes certain observances appear strange or boorish. If the educated sons of India will not honour these ancient observances, who will? By Prof. Abhay Charan Mukerji, M.A. in *the Hindustan Review.*

THE ELEMENTS OF A DRAMA.

Some scholars seem to suppose that scene description can give us a clue to the knowledge as to whether painted scenes were used at a particular time or not. They think that scene descriptions would not occur if actual sceneries were represented by painted scenes. If there are painted scenes the nature of the place and the atmosphere would be quite obvious to the people, it is only when painted scenes are not used that the necessity for describing scenes arises. Thus they think that if the dramas of a particular literature at a particular period contain much scene-description it is a sign that at that time painted scenes were not used. The fact that the Sanskrit dramas contain scene-descriptions seems to have been taken as an evidence of the absence of painted scenes in the Hindu Theatre. But it must be said that such a test is not quite a reliable one. There are occasions when though the spectators have before their eyes the painted scenes, yet a reference to them in speech might enhance the effect of the drama. In staging the *Uttra-ramcharita,* in the third act even if the whole scenery be presented before the audience by means of painted scenes, it doubtlessly does a great deal in heightening the pathos when Rama while mentioning the mountains, forests trees etc. (though they may be represented by painted scenes) remembers his past days which he spent there with Sita. If Rama were not to mention those things stringing them with the chain of his memories the effect would never be so pathetic inspite of all the beauties of the painted scenes that might be used. Again in the fourth act of *Vikramorvashi* the sceneries of the Gandhamadana mountain may well be represented by painted scenes, but if Pururavas were not to mention the flowers, the trees, birds, etc., in the course of his lament much of the charm would be lost. There is a sweet delicate pathos in his asking these things to tell him something about his beloved.

Of course all this does not conclusively prove that painted scenes were used at that time but at any rate this goes a great way to show that scene-descriptions might have been used in order to supplement the effect of the painted scenes and not necessarily only to supplant it. It might also be said that if only a blank curtain was hung probably only scene-suggestions might have been used, in that case an elaborate scene-description would not be indulged in, for it would only painfully emphasise the absence of scenes.

Yet it must be said that the whole subject regarding the use of painted scenes in staging the Sanskrit dramas is open to investigation. A definite mention of scenes is not to be had in works which are available at present. But a critical study of the stage direction used in the plays throws a flood of light on the question. With reference to Indian dramas the Encyclopaedia Brittanica has, "Of scenic apparatus it knew but little." Prof. Macdonell says, "A curtain divided in the middle was a necessary part of the stage arrangement; it did not however, separate the audience from the stage, as in the Roman theatre, but armed the back-ground of the stage. Behind the curtain was the tirng-room (*nepathya*), whence the actors came on the stage."

From the stage direction given at the end of the *Urubhanga* of Bhasa, it is reasonable to suppose that there was not only one curtain on the stage when the play was acted. We get the stage-direction and even aftar this Dhritarashtra and Ashwathama are on the stage and utter a verse. Of course they could not have remained there without a curtain in the back-ground. Thus it is clear that at least there was more than one curtain.

Then there is also some evidence to prove that double scenes were shown on the stage, *i.e.,* two or more different portions of the adjoining rooms or places were shown simultaneously. Thus in the third act of the *Malavikagnimitra,* in the same setting three different portions of the garden are shown. At one place the king and the Vidushaka are talking together, at another place Vakulavalika is decorating

the feet of Malavika by painting it with dyes, while in another portion of the garden the Queen Iravati and her maid-servant Nipunika are spying at the whole affair. The three groups are in different adjoining portions of the garden; but all these are simultaneously shown on the stage. And yet clearer proof is to be found in the first act of *Mudrarakshasa*. We see Chanakya sitting in his room; the spy comes on the stage as is indicated by the stage direction (enter), yet he is not allowed to enter the rooms of Chanakya. A conversation ensues between the spy and the pupil of Chanakya, who does not allow him to enter the room of his teacher. They both or on the stage yet decidedly outside the room of Chanakya which too is before the eyes of the spectators. Afterwards Chanakya overhears them and allows the spy to enter. Then he enters the teacher's room and this is again indicated by another stage-direction (enter). And then they converse in the room of Chanakya. Even in Bhasa we get such an evidence· In the third act of his *Pratima-nataka* Bharata is on the stage, and then he enters the State-house; even then he is before the eyes of the spectators. Devakulika enters the stage and after speaking something he again enters the State house where he talks with Bharata. While they are thus talking there, of course not behind the scenes, Sumantra with the Queens enters the stage but not the State-house, and after some time they also enter the State-house. Thus it is clear that the inside and the outside of the State-house are both before the eyes of the spectators. Thus there must have been partition curtains or such other things, for otherwise it would be improbable to act this scene.

Thus we have seen that there were at least two main curtains and a few partition curtains to be used on the Indian stage. Now let us see if these were different curtains for different scenes and whether these curtains had any paintings on them.

If it could be proved in any way that there were painted scenes or any distinctive features on the curtains, of course, it would follow that those curtains could not have been used in every act or scene but only in a few particular ones. Thus though a blank curtain can be used almost in all the scenes yet a curtain with paintings representing a garden cannot be used to represent a symmetry or the inside of a palace room and so on.

Now Professor Macdonell says, "It is somewhat curious that while there are many and minute stage directions about dress and decorations no less than about the actions of the players, nothing is said in this way as to change of scenes." Of course Professor Macdonell seems to be correct in the statement of facts, at least as far as we can gather from the data available But this does not prove that there was actually no change of scenes on the Indian stage. In the seventeenth and the eighteenth century changes of scenes on the stage did take place in England, but so much indications are found in "Sir Martin Marr-all" of John Dryden, and "The non-Juror of Colley Cibber." In these two plays no mention of any change of scene is made. Both are divided into five acts and the serial number of acts is given at the beginning of each act. But this does not prove that scenes were not used in the staging of these plays. The same may be true about Sanskrit dramas also. By Professor Ram Chandra, B.A., L.L.B. in *the Vedic Magazine*.

SELECTION.

THE TEMPLE CITIES.

Leaving now the Temple for the open air, and not without some feeling of relief from the varied emotional stress of a first course through its labyrinth upon a stranger, we see standing near the gate the Temple Car; itself a veritable tower, upon colossal wheels, the carven palace of the god upon his seasonal procession. Its carving is vivid, its lions of heraldic vivacity and vigour, and with a sort of strange humour expressed from head to tail, which compel one to defend it as a true and individual work of art, singularly free from mere conventionalism, into which it is ever the danger and curse of ecclesiastical art in all lands to fall.

But of all things Indian of which the West has heard unfavourably—Protestant Britain, and perhaps America above all—this "dreadful car of Jaggernath" is probably the extreme one: and of course where such peculiarly unfavourable an impression has been created, and such gruesome stories told, there may well have been some foundation for them. Still, there is less danger of human self-sacrifice now-a-days; and accidents may be guarded against. So in my town-planning discourses, I cannot but defend this ceremonial of the car, as a civic institution, and a festival essentially beneficent. That to this we largely owe the fine lay-out of the main quadrangle of streets of a Temple-City will not be denied; nor that this lay-out, by setting this high standard for the best streets, must have helped to maintain that of other also. How much better a way of encouraging the maintenance of good roads, before the demands of motors. What better lesson of discouragement of the perpetual encroachment upon streets which is a minor (yet in aggregate a main) cause of congestion of thoroughfares? And how superior this way of at once carrying public opinion against encroachments, and summarily removing them when made, to that by perpetually serving magistrate's notices, with all that these invole!

I can imagine nothing more helpful to city improvement than the reestablishment of car-routes, by a conjunction of Temple authorities and municipal planning office; and this wherever extension or

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widening is really required: and I have more faith in the good sense of both type of man and mind than to believe that their present mutual estrangement, by too exclusive devotion to their respective specialisms, can much longer continue. I ask nothing better than to plan streets worthy of the car being used to inaugurate them, and to clear them too from time to time: while the collective pull, in which all citizens are encouraged to take a hand, is already an admirable form of civic education, which might readily be developed in India, and even initiated in other countries, say by American Civic Societies!

In some cities there is a Floating Car, and it may be a Water Festival to keep it company, with lantern illuminations in the evening. Instead of filling up Tanks in malaria panic, as so many misguided sanitations and muncipal bodies have done, I look forward to the revival of this floating Car and Water Fete upon every considerable Tank; and this not simply as one of the most delightful and joyous forms of festival, but also as the best of ways of assuring the respect and the purifying of these beautiful and cooling waters. These great Temple Tanks and city tanks, when not neglected of course, but properly kept and laid out, are the very finest, and most beautiful, of public places and public gardens in the world. Calcutta seems one of the few Indian cities where such Tank Squares are appreciated; yet even there, there seems to be far more of filling up than of making new ones. A true combination of planning and gardening with sanitation, will however set about accomplishing this everywhere; and the present, or rather recent, panic of tank-filling will be remembered only as an unlucky dream.

We thus return once more to the City-planning which constantly underlies all the present discussion, even where not at first sight in evidence. So let us next consider the town-plan of Madura, with its processional square of streets, and its ancient fortress walls and moat, now converted into a second series of streets. But outside these survivals of old religion and old govermental control respectively, the town has lost its sense of unity and order and begins to break down towards that congested slumdom, which is now so largely destroying it.

We need therefore to seek out some better example than Madura, some other old Temple City not yet cursed by premature industrialism, and pushed towards chaos. This good example I peculiarly find in Srirangam, a city of which I had never heard in Europe, nor indeed in India until lately; but close beside Trichinopoly, a name well known to Europeans, by old associations, if mostly with cheroots.

As guidance offered to this city, for its own sake, and also as a needed criticism of Fergussion's less satisfactory influence and authority, upon current opinion, I here cite the South Indian Railway Illustrated Guide. It says of Srirangam Temple:—"This island contains one of the largest and richest temples in Southern India. This Temple can hardly be considered architecturally beautiful; and, as is too frequently the case with Dravidian Temples, is imposing simply on account of its enormous extent. It is rather a fortuitous assemblage of walls, gopurams and mantapams, than a structure built to a well-arranged and preconceived design. In all probability the temple is the work of many Kings; and originated in the central shrine, which successive monarchs left untouched, while rivalling each other in surrounding it with halls and lofty gopurams. Be the explanation what it may, the fact remains that the architectural merit of the entire structure becomes less the closer the proximity to the central shrine. This is to be more regretted, as it must be admitted with Fergusson, that, could the principle of design be reversed, Srirangam would be one of the finest temples in Southern India."

This writer appears to think that successive kings should have cleared away their predecessors' buildings. Here we see, advocated for old temples, as so commonly for old towns, clearance first. Always demolition—whereas these old fashioned Kings left the central shrine—their holy of holies untouched.

The main point is that Fergusson has condemned this style of architecture as a failure; since to him it seems that a reversal of the temple-plan would have been the right thing. But despite all the respect previously expressed for this really eminent and initiative writer, I am here compelled to propose the reversal of Fergusson; through a re-interpretation of this Temple, at once more appreciative, and more rational also, because developmental in its own way, not merely esthetic in ours. So let me state my thesis strongly in defence; as to maintain, against all comers, that here is a case of Fergusson missing the point, and failing to understand: for Srirangam, in its own high characteristic way, of *plan* and *growth*, when we understand these as it was built to be understood, is, so far as I can discover, the greatest Temple of all time, and all faiths! (I do not say all styles).

Of course such reconsideration must be on its own merits. We must not bring to it our external foreign taste; and because it is not like Tanjore Temple, or a European Cathedral, complain that it is "a fortuitous assemblage without design."

We have to ask "What is this? How did it arise?" As in any science, so in any criticism, we seek to see the thing as it really is: only thereafter have we any right to consider wherein it might have been amended and improved; and this again not according to our personal and arbitrary desires, but towards its own efficient purpose.

Our problem then is first of all to read its history that is to decipher its growth; and this is not from books, but from this actual plan, here before us and starting from the centre outwards.

Here in ancient days there was a local shrine, central to the island and its villages. Some thoughful teacher at one time, some saintly soul at another

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became an influence extending beyond island, and pilgrims began to come. A little Temple was raised to include the shrine, and its court would be inhabited by its holy man, doubtless with his disciples. Outside this gather more dwellings; first the huts of Sanyassians, but later more permanent, and increasingly of Brahmin character. Granaries are needed, and arise first as round-huts of the old type still common even as dwellings in Madras, and surviving as corn-stores in Bengal villages, though there superseded as dwellings by rectangular plans. The whole area becomes included within a larger wall with a southward gateway—(on the third wall from centre in plan.) Within the enclosure, and outside it also further developments, proceed, both material and spiritual; as of incrèasing granaries and additional shrines. Outside arise new dwellings, of larger magnitude and space· in time these likewise become spiritualised in property and use; and at length transformed as well. New shrines thus appear; and here also, though probably for later, the N. E. space becomes the Hall of a Thousand coloumns. The new rectangular wall is more carefully oriented than its predecessors; three gateway Goparams are built, the largest to the eastward. There is now a clearer differentiation of temple and town, of sacred and secular; for a new street is kept clear all round the wall, presumably as a Car street, and with house-lots opposite. These are to-day of varying breadth, suggesting that those now narrow may have arisen by division. Another wall again rises, to surround this clear rectangle of dwellings facing the Car street next the Temple wall; and this is given four gateways towards the cardinal points; but these comparatively small, in subordination to those within, and on three sides of the previous temple enclosures. But outside this a new town extension is provided. This is again a rectangular street system, parallel to the last, with a fresh Car Street, and now houses on either hand, and lost less deep. Evidently, with city growth, caste distinctions and wealth requirements are being more emphasised. The lower and poorer castes are kept outside the larger gateways of this wall; and their houses cluster especially to the South and East, but not to the less auspicious West. Note on plan how these poorer dwellings spread and sub-divide from these gates and either hand, in lots of small and irregular size, and with a narrow lane running obliquely N. by E., from near the East Gopuram.

Finally comes the great completion by Tiramulu, king of builders. In the South Bazaar it will be seen that existing properties were respected, as they stand mostly facing northward towards the road along the south wall. But this road is narrow; so instead of wasting compensation and upsetting business (as modern municipalities and their engineers in the industrial age, of lapsed planning, have done, and still largely incline to do), the sensible course is taken, and also the more practical for business and communications, more seemly also—that of making a new Bazar Street east and west. and of allocating new plots of larger size on each side upon the land hitherto unoccupird. Some houses next the wall outside, also a small temple (perhaps private, perhaps for the humbler caste hitherto outside) seem to have alaeady sprung up on the west side. The new street northward is continued with houses on each side; but on the east, the open space next the wall suffices; and also on the north, so that new and deeper plots are kept opposite, so far as existing irregular holdings allow. This new town enclosure, as yet the final one, is thus kept in good proportion. Its rectangular walls is built, and the four great gopurams. N., S., E., and W., are now begun, of course in true alignment to their predecessors. These gateway towers or on a scale unparalled, as their megalithic beginnings show; but they remain unfinished, like other works of Tiramulu, owing to his untimely and tragic death, and as too monumental for the means and inclinations of his successors.

The same process of the Temple guiding and including its city development, is even now going on, clearly and simply, at the adjacent smaller (Shiva) Temple town, a mile or so eastwards, of which the plan is reproduced (on a larger scale) below that of Srirangam. Outside the triple temple walls (marked by dark lines,) runs the Care Street, with houses of its caste community. A great wall, with four gopurams, encloses the whole; and a secondary street surrounds this fourth wall, and is thus obviously included within the temple-system, and so far sharing its sanctity. Here then is plainly a second Srirangam, and still in progress. It is not a little interesting to find within the Temple itself, a great building activity, with carvers busy at work, at once traditional and skilled: so here, more than in any other old temple or cathedral I have seen, the old constructive spririt is still living.

Returning to Srirangam, we notice on the way that, despite minor irregularities, the lay-out of fields and rural holdings shares the rectangular layout and orientation of these temple-cities, greater and less. That is the ancient folk-way: simple ploungh-ing and sacred building are at one; life at its simplest runs parallel to life at its highest.

It is this mode and process of growth—so essentially regular, so natural yet so reasoned, so peculiarly defined, so mounmentally organised, through zone after zone of growth in succeeding centres—that the writer of our Railway Guide described for us at the outset (page **218**) as "rather a fortuitous assemblage of walls, gopurams and mantapams, than a structure built to a well-arranged and pre-conceived design." Let it not be supposed that this is merely the carelessness of a minor writer or a passing error of Fergusson's: broadly speaking, the guide-books of the world are still too much at this level, as regards the cities they describe: even the best of them; for the most part Baedeker and Murray themselves. Their statements of facts, catalogues and dates of buildings etc., are not complained of: it is their understanding of cities which is deficient. The idea and method above outlined is not adequately before their authors—that of reading the essential history of a city from its plan; which, in so far as showing its growth, is the essential record of its outward history, and even of its inner evolution. Hence the guide-books of the future must each be much of an anti-Baedeker, and super-Murray.

That our writer above is not without some feeling that "fortuitous" is nonsense, he shows by his next sentence (q.v.) that (undeniably of course) "the architectural merit becomes less the closer the proximity to the central shrine. This is the more to be regretted, as it must be admitted with Fergusson, that could the principle of design be reversed, Srirangam would be one of the finest temples in Southern India."

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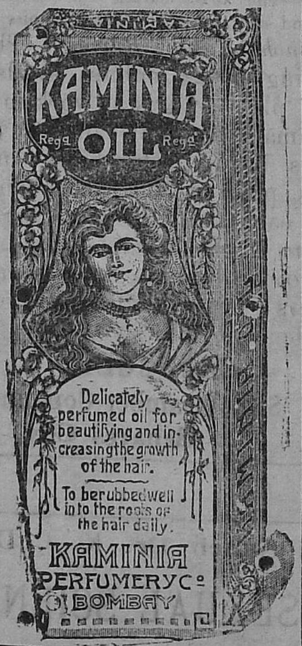

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Chief Auditor's Office, Trichinopoly. 11—3—19. } E. E. B. BAILEY, *Chief Auditor.*

Printed and published by the proprietor S. M. Raja Ram Rao, at the "Wednesday Review Press," 3, Main Guard Road, Teppakulam, Trichinopoly.